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The Verdict of Public Opinion on The Railroad Question

The Nation Votes—

Against Government Ownership
Against Government Operation
Against "Soviet" Management

AND

For the return of the railroads to
their owners under broad
National Regulation

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Association of Railway Executives
61 BROADWAY, NEW YORK

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The Nation Opposes Adventure in Soviet Economics

"We shall have Lenine in Washington and chaos in the country. Labor will suffer unimaginable misery."

ST. LOUIS POST DISPATCH

If they can force Congress on an ultimatum backed by their power to tie up the railroads to accede to their demands with regard to ownership and operation and profits of the railroads, then **we part with democratic government under law; we pass to autocracy under the dictatorship of labor. All industry will go the same way** and the will of a class, of any minority having power to enforce its will through threats of economic disaster or physical violence, will be the supreme law of the land. We shall have a Lenine in Washington and chaos in the country. **Labor, in common with the rest of the people, will suffer unimaginable misery.**

We do not believe that intelligent American labor will take this road to ruin.

SYRACUSE JOURNAL

Call it what one may, the scheme in its essence is Bolshevism under an American guise. It is in spirit **a raid upon the industrial prosperity of the nation.**

If it can be brought to success as conceived by the railroad chiefs it would result in as great a **prostration of the industry of the United States** as Russian industry is the victim of in the territory ruled by Lenine and Trotsky.

In Conflict With All Experience

NEW YORK TIMES

It is plainly a venture into radical socialism that the Brotherhood Chiefs propose; more than that, it is a very long step toward the principles of Lenine and Trotzky and of Soviet Government. The plan is so **violently at war with all human experience and human reason** that the impression gains strength that the Brotherhood Chiefs, who are men of undoubted intelligence, do not for a moment believe that they are going to put it through.

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

The railroad men's basic principle assumes that the economies of the country can be put on a sound foundation by financing every essential industry with government bonds, necessarily guaranteeing every such industry by taxation, and produce a high grade service at low cost under a control complicated by conflicting factors.

That assumption does not conform to any rational survey of facts or prospects and is not justified in experience. The basic principle has sufficient resemblance to that of the political and industrial soviets to be **burdened with their complete failure.**

One "Soviet adventure" would, if it held, force sovieting of all industry, and bring complete disorganization.

NEW YORK WORLD

The plan of the railroad brotherhoods is a straightout adventure into soviet economics. It contemplates collective ownership, but **class operation and control, which is at the foundation of the soviet system.** If their scheme of nationalization under class control is to be carried out in respect to railroads, nobody can draw the line where it shall stop until all industry is under soviet direction.

NEW YORK COMMERCIAL

It sounds very much like the doctrines of Lenine and Trotzky. It is nothing more nor less than a refinement of Bolshevism. The plan, if placed in operation, would, from a practical standpoint, fail just as miserably as the other fantastic schemes for communistic operation of public utilities. But by that time **our whole economic structure would have been torn asunder and intelligent, liberty-loving America would be as completely disorganized as ever Russia has been.**

England's Test Worries Workingmen

NEW YORK EVENING POST

England has been since the close of the war a perfect laboratory of political and social experiment. The results are precious, in the way of **showing what ought not to be done and what cannot be done.** A favorite catchword of English innovators has been "direct action." * * * * **The more sober workingmen are drawing away from it.** They see in it not only a blunder but a grievous handicap to their own cause. * * * * We may account it a piece of good fortune that the experiment of Communism on a large scale has been tried out in Russia and in Hungary. Its collapse in the latter was not needed to show its essential nature. That is exhibited in Russia.

BOSTON TRANSCRIPT

The attempt of the railroad brotherhoods * * * * is a proposition for that sort of political "direct action" by labor organizations which is of the essence of I. W. W.-ism and Bolshevism. * * * * It is a proposition not only for the substitution of a revolutionary for a constitutional authority, and therefore fraught with destruction for our institutions, but it is a grossly inequitable scheme, proposing that this possible aggregate of 300,000 people shall be **relieved of the burden of the high cost of living at the expense of all the other people** of the country.

NEW YORK SUN

The railroad workers know as well as anybody knows that under the Soviet committee scheme of **nobody wanting to produce and everybody wanting to squander** they could not get out of their railroad jobs the wages they now get. They know as well as anybody knows that soon they could not get out of their railroad jobs half the American living they always have had. They know as well as anybody knows that it would not be long, under the Soviet doctrine of all squander and no production, before they could not get out of their railroad jobs a dog's living.

Russia is not satisfactory as an example in government, these papers find. Nor Hungary.

RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH

America has not yet reached the point of desperation or insanity where it is willing to see all of its democratic institutions overthrown, and to take Bolshevist Russia for its exemplar in government. Legislation is not to be secured by class bludgeoning, but only by a calm consideration of the united interests of the whole people with no line of demarcation between labor, capital and those who may fall between these descriptive classifications.

OMAHA WORLD-HERALD

Bela Kun, the boss Hungarian bolshevist, is now in jail at Vienna, and in his pocket a roll of bills that a greyhound couldn't jump over—while at Buda-Pest where he had his headquarters during his brief reign, everybody is stony-broke. American radicals would do well to remember this.

“America Not Ready to Surrender”

MACON (GA.) TELEGRAPH

Out of the unrest of the present, it was inevitable that the Socialists should hasten to make capital. But the hour has not yet struck when the American people are ready to surrender their republic to brainless visionaries. * * * * What man or what party would rise up to put an end to that form of constitutional government which has made this America of ours the single power that was able to save civilization and democracy from Hun annihilation?

NEW YORK TIMES

It took twenty-five years to destroy the free silver coinage delusion. In less than one week the Plumb plan to have the railroads owned and operated for the benefit of labor and politics has been damaged beyond possibility of repair. Mr. Plumb himself was the most efficient agent in the demolishing of his own plan. * * * * The plan is based on the doctrines of Karl Marx, and Marxian socialism is the foundation of Russian sovietism.

NORFOLK (VA.) DISPATCH

The question is between established order based on economic principles from which labor's evolution and growth are inexorable, on the one hand, and radicalism based on **a theory which has been discredited in the blood and suffering of millions**, on the other.

CINCINNATI TRIBUNE

That may have been the voice of the Federation of Labor, but it was the sentiment and **the spirit of Bolshevism**, to which sentiment and spirit there is no stronger opposition than in the whole philosophy upon which the Federation of Labor is builded and in the preservation of which alone it has its permanency of life, in a mission of constructiveness.

The Nation Opposes Duress By Any Group

The country has stated clearly its desire for the roads to be returned, and is not pleased by a minority's attempt to force the majority by threats.

NEW YORK TIMES

The Brotherhood chiefs seek the enforcement of their purpose through **duress upon Congress and the country**. They use the language of menace, as they did three years ago. They declare that "the employes are in no mood to brook the return of the lines to their former control." We are sure that on reflection they will see that these words are ill-advised. It is an occasion for candid counsel and not for threats; and the Government, capital, and the country were never in a mood to be more considerate of the interests and the just demands of labor. Besides, they will not win by truculence. It is untimely. The country has just held a practical referendum on this very question, and the answer is a **thundering demand for the return of the lines to private operation**.

No party will be cowardly enough or reckless enough to invite disaster by yielding to this demand.

BALTIMORE SUN

No party in Congress will dare to knuckle to such a **declaration of tyranny**. The party which did would be swept out of existence as by a whirlwind.

The railroad workers have a right to living wages; they have no right to say that the country shall or shall not have Government ownership of railroads, and to **threaten a nation-wide paralysis** of transportation, industry and business if their views are not accepted. And the American people, after overthrowing the tyranny of the Hohenzollerns, will not submit to **class tyranny at home**, whether the tyrants be domineering capitalists or domineering minorities of any other description.

ST. LOUIS REPUBLIC

Whatever is done should be done with deliberation and caution. * * * * It is **everybody's problem** and should be settled in the manner prescribed by law through representatives of all the people.

That solution, we believe, should result in a return of the roads to their owners under such Government control as will secure **fair rates, fair wages and the elimination of wasteful competition**. If the railroad men will join the rest of the people on a program like that, the railroad problem can be solved.

It will not be solved by strikes.

Will Consider Nothing Under Duress

PROVIDENCE JOURNAL

The great body of the people has time and again shown itself resentful of attempted **dictation on the part of any class**. The brotherhood plan might properly be discussed on its merits, but it should not be considered at all so long as it carries a threat.

BROOKLYN CITIZEN

The railways are still under Government control, and the Government has behind it the power of the Army and Navy. The Kaiser defied this power, much to his sorrow. And the Kaiser was a "bigger" man than Mr. Stone, the chief of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. The railway employees can well wait for Congress to act on their demand for a wage increase. They are not starving, but have it infinitely **better than millions of other wage-earners** who make no threats against the Government.

One result of threats may be the forced withdrawal of capital, which is likely to mean lower wages and more unemployment.

NEW YORK JOURNAL OF COMMERCE

The private wealth of the few is a matter comparatively unimportant, but in seeking to expropriate these few the wealth of the nation may be destroyed. **A modern industrial State requires vast amounts of capital handled by able men and the diminution of that capital or the elimination of the men who handle it brings suffering to all.** The Russian Bolsheviks in destroying capitalists destroyed capital as well, brought the whole economic life of the country to a standstill and reduced the people to starvation. It should be possible to make the fact plain even to the gullible people who swallow the Plumb Plan, that **capital is indestructible except at the cost of general ruin.**

DALLAS NEWS

They assert the privilege of **fixing their own wages**, and have the temerity to threaten the country with an industrial paralysis if they are not suffered to exercise that privilege. There ought to be **no compromise with men who have assumed that despotic attitude.** It may be that they will be able to accomplish all that they threaten, but the consequences could not be more disastrous than a surrender by the representatives of more than a hundred million people to the tyrannical decree of two or three hundred thousand well organized workingmen.

BURLINGTON (VT.) FREE PRESS

When Germany sought to starve the children as well as the adult population of Great Britain to bring that country to terms, we hailed it as the ruthless warfare of the barbarous Hun. When in time of peace a combination of men projects the same thing for the infants of American cities through a railroad strike to force the policy they advocate on the nation, it is just as ruthless and just as indefensible as in the case of Germany, and in one way more so. It is an act of war in time of peace.

NEW YORK COMMERCIAL

Labor must realize that it must co-operate in the readjustment of economic conditions, otherwise capital will be able to go no further, and **lower wages will be forced through shutting down of industry** and consequent unemployment. This is no time for blustering demands.

Financing Possibilities at Four Per Cent

WASHINGTON POST

The railroad brotherhoods propose a plan, sublime in its defiance of all principles of fair play or economic efficacy. They propose that the railroad workers shall get profits at the expense of other workers, and that other workers shall stand all losses. They propose to extinguish private ownership of railroads by exchanging 4 per cent government bonds for the present holdings. They forget that the United States could get money to defend its life only by paying $4\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. "Buy the railroads for us, good people, and give us one-third of the profits," is the naked demand of a scant one-twentieth of the workers of this country.

Nation Opposes Government Ownership

The country was willing to experiment when war compelled it, but opinion is strongly against going further with an experiment that failed.

KANSAS CITY STAR

We have had enough of experiment for these times. It is time to get down to earth and exercise of common business sense, not only as to the railroads, but in all other lines of business and industry. This is not the time to attempt to remedy what **disastrous experiment** has wrought by **blindly rushing into another**. * * * *

The plan offered by the railroad brotherhoods offers no relief from present conditions. It only **plunges the country deeper into an impossible condition**.

SCRANTON (PA.) SCRANTONIAN

While the war was on the people did not murmur. Even the shippers who were put to troubles galore by uncertainties of transportation were silent. They were willing to put up with inconveniences, that even at that time were unnecessary, rather than seem to lack in American patriotism. But now that there is **no longer excuse for the tinkering with or throttling of the railroads**, which are the arteries of business, they have a just right to complain of the deplorable mess that those in war-time authority have made of the transportation service of the country. They have a right to insist that **the railroads and express companies be returned to their owners, that order may again reign** and that the **business be resumed** on the lines of common sense.

PORTLAND OREGONIAN

The new government ownership scheme should be rejected because it would lay an intolerable burden on the American people—all of them, not excepting the railroad men themselves. * * * * Our railroad system is one of our proudest triumphs, superior to any other on earth. The railroad men's scheme is a radical departure from that system. It is the first step on the roads which leads through the **enormous debts** of Australia and New Zealand to the industrial condition of Soviet Russia, where the **best labor is only 50 per cent efficient**.

Sees No Hope For Improvement

INDIANAPOLIS STAR

It has been experience in this country and elsewhere that governments are notoriously inefficient and wasteful. There is no reason to hope for improvement under the proposed program, and unless there should be improvement the public would be the loser. **The cost of the roads comes out of the people.**

PHOENIX (ARIZONA) REPUBLICAN

As we have hitherto and frequently remarked within the past year, government ownership is dead and will remain dead until all memory of the fiasco of the last two years has faded away, and that will be a long while. The people would not stand for another experiment so long as they remembered the results of the one they are now passing through.

Instead of remedying present ills these editors find that government ownership would be far worse than present difficulties.

LOUISVILLE COURIER-JOURNAL

It is neither capitalistic nor prejudiced to say that the programme means a **venture into a social, economic and political morass**, which labor, as it is called, will be among the first to curse as a nightmare, a burden upon itself. Sprung at a time when the disturbances of the war have produced an economic carbuncle on the world, **it intensifies the suffering**, when the nation craves alleviation. The high cost of living, aside from any artificial factors is largely a result of an oversupply of money and an inadequate supply of commodities. Labor has demanded a shortening of its hours, which spells a **diminution of production without a diminution of consumption**. Then labor, thus a contributor to the causes of high living costs, complains and demands still more pay and, incidentally, clamors for still shorter hours, in turn **producing another reduction in output and another advance in living costs**.

CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

The panacea for the bloated cost of living does not lie in continued boosting of wages, which, as a matter of fact, is one of the most pregnant causes of constantly increasing costs. * * * *

State socialism will wreck this nation if it ever comes to pass. The scheme of the labor leaders is not based upon sound principles, and is un-American. Short shrift should be given to its consideration. Real American labor leaders—patriotic leaders—will co-operate with the clear-thinking men of the nation to reach fundamentals in the struggle to readjust living and financial conditions. It can't be done by **driving the brain and the capital of the nation into seclusion**.

Public Wishes Roads Returned

FORT WORTH (TEX.) STAR TELEGRAM

We think that the brotherhoods will discover that the American people will not consent to any kind of Government ownership of railroads, whether operated under control of the employes or under control of the Government directly. The people want the **railroads returned to their owners and that is all there is to it**.

MILWAUKEE SENTINEL

Mr. Plumb is so in love with his plan to make a bad matter infinitely worse, that he talks about a revolution to bring it about. * * * *

Under the constitution our people are entitled to have a revolution every four years if they want one. So if Mr. Plumb thinks his nationalization plan is a popular proposal, all he has to do is to run for president on that issue. * * * *

If he knows anything at all about public sentiment as to a **further plunge into the bog of government, that is, political operation of railroads**, he must know that he would come out at an extremely small end of the horn.

PORTLAND (ORE.) TELEGRAM

Before the war it was a fact that **there was no country in the world where freight could be shipped so cheaply or passengers carried so cheaply** as in the United States. We were competing with government operated railroads in countries of low wage scales and heavy traffic. This is practical commentary on the efficiency of American private enterprise in railroading, and before it most theories of the tremendous economy possible with public operation fall in a heap.

The Public is sympathetic, but shows no desire to cure an ailment by a treatment which has always failed.

HOUSTON POST

The entire nation will stand with the brotherhoods for reasonable food prices, for there is a common hardship to be relieved. The entire nation can agree, too, with the statement of the brotherhood chiefs that **lower prices rather than higher wages** are needed by the country at present.

But the nationalization of the roads for the joint benefit of government and workers is **not the remedy for any ill**, and the country knows that as a business institution the **government has always been conspicuous as a failure.**

Business, transportation and industry are not true government functions in a Republic like ours.

BALTIMORE SUN

The main, if not the whole, argument against Government ownership lies in the fact that Government departments are notoriously inefficient.

Men will not work for the Government as faithfully as they will for private employers. That is a matter of common knowledge. Increased wages and promotion, if not retention in office, depend **not upon faithful service, but upon political influence.** It is better for an employe to have the good will of his Congressman than of his superior officer.

Canada, Having Lost Money At It, Watches Us

VANCOUVER (B. C.) DAILY PROVINCE

If Congress can be shown how to operate railways profitably under public ownership the information will be of great value to Canada. The Canadian people have a vast investment in railways now under public control. It will be worth hundreds of millions to learn how they can be operated to give a profit to the public owners.

NEW YORK EVENING SUN

The Government, taking the lines from the hands of the men whose genius had made them the best and most efficient in the world, essayed to run them on what Mr. Stone would call principles of industrial democracy. What the result has been is known to all. **Mismanagement, confusion, red tape have consumed far more than was ever before earned in profits**, and have brought the roads to the verge of ruin.

INDIANAPOLIS NEWS

On the basis of the showing made during the war period it is fair to say that practically **no one was converted to government ownership** except some of the men who benefited largely through increased pay.

If railroads could be more profitably operated by eliminating private ownership and if by that plan the public and employes could be assured larger returns in the way either of higher wages or better service, there would be no objection to the labor proposal, except as to the manner in which it has been put forward. The common experience of mankind teaches that the **results of government ownership will be directly opposite to the assumption on which the success of the labor scheme is wholly conditioned.**

A homeseeker hears about the beauties of government ownership and strives to apply the same principles to his own affairs.

PHILADELPHIA PUBLIC LEDGER

The gentleman who guides the destinies of the column is desirous of moving his lares and penates to Philadelphia and is looking for a suburban home which will afford comfortable shelter for two persons and a dog.

We desire, neither to buy nor rent the property of which we are in quest. It is our plan to have the government take over the house, issuing to the owner in payment therefor government bonds bearing interest at the rate of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent per annum. Immediately after the transaction is concluded we agree to move in and take possession of the property. If at the end of a year of occupancy and after allowing ourself full salary, paying all household bills and other expenses incurred, there remains from the income received during that time a surplus, we agree to split that surplus fifty-fifty with the government and the people of Philadelphia. **If there is no surplus there will be nothing to split**, but it is a part of this covenant and agreement that we are to remain in undisputed possession of the house.

"A preposterous proposition" you say. So it is. But it is no more preposterous, nor does it differ greatly from the proposition just made by the brotherhoods in connection with the railways. The brotherhoods claim to have 2,000,000 persons behind their proposition. Contingent upon the government acceding to our request, we agree to enlist 5,000,000 supporters of our house-renting plan.

NEW YORK GLOBE

Consensus of opinion is that it (the Plumb plan) is impracticable, that no lasting benefits will accrue to any one, and that when the first real industrial depression hits the country, and such a thing is not an impossibility, its proponents will be the first to call for a **return to private control and management. Under private ownership the United States has had the best railroad system in the world, with lowest capitalization and rates and the best paid workers.** Even the slight example of what the Plumb plan could do to the transportation industry that has been furnished by government control during the war emergency is enough to cause the taxpayers of this country to pause before supporting such a radical departure from established usages which have made the United States the premier nation of the world.

"No Further Experiments"

OKLAHOMA CITY TIMES

America should risk **no further experiments** in that direction. Let the cost of living be reduced. Let wages be made sufficient to maintain the American standard of living for railroad men as well as other workers. But steer clear of government ownership. That way lies no end of **inefficiency, shiftlessness and a mixture of politics with business that brings failure.**

SPOKANE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

The railroad problem can not be solved through any plan of government operation or ownership. It could not be solved under this scheme even if the government should confiscate outright the country's railroads.

CHEYENNE (WYO.) STATE LEADER

The unmistakable result of the war experiment is that government control is unpopular.

Antagonism to "the government in business" is shown in all quarters. Extracts from papers of north, south and west.

KNOXVILLE JOURNAL & TRIBUNE

If in the introduction of such a bill and favor of passing it into a law, Representative Sims (of Tennessee) imagines he is reflecting the will of his own immediate constituents or of the people of his State, he surely is ignorant of the public will.

Everybody knows that under government ownership and control, **the railroads would be dragged into the slimy pool of partisan politics** from which they could not be extricated by anything short of a **disturbing and destructive revolution.**

ATLANTA CONSTITUTION

We believe that the public sentiment of the United States is overwhelmingly against such a **revolutionary and visionary experiment** as the Plumb plan contemplated.

AUGUSTA CHRONICLE

The railroads ought not remain in the hands of the government a day longer than necessary—and they have remained as long as necessary already.

TAMPA (FLORIDA) SENTINEL

The sooner the railroads are returned to their owners the happier the taxpayers will be. They have no leaning towards public ownership of the roads. They see that the plan discourages initiative, retards development, delays transportation, eliminates competition, discriminates against private enterprises, increases rates, imposes high taxes and diminishes service. **They wish the government to get out of business as soon as fair terms of transfer can be arranged.**

POWERS LAKE (N. D.) ECHO

More could be accomplished for the benefit of the people of this country if the **ills of government instead of the ills of business** received the attention of our senators and congressmen.

War-time Control Gave Experience, Anyway

PUEBLO (COL.) STAR JOURNAL

Numerous believers in government ownership of the railroads have been **converted by their experience** under federal control. Now is the worst time that could be picked to agitate for government control of railroads or any other public utilities. More interest might be created by bringing up the subject at a time when the people have forgotten the bad effects of our attempt to run the transportation system.

HOUSTON POST

Happily for the whole country, the people can now act with at least sufficient light from actual experience and observation to enable them to reach intelligent conclusions. They have seen that **government control means diminishing efficiency.** They have seen that it means **inferior service.** They have seen that it means much **greater expense.**

And since the brotherhood plan contemplates the soviet system, evolved from bolshevist principles in Russia—which have well nigh wrecked that once great empire—the people will have no trouble in determining whether they can hope for better transportation service at the hands of a tripartite control.

***Failures of government ownership discourage these papers
from further tampering with theory.***

WATERTOWN (S. D.) HERALD

Government control of public utilities—which is nothing more nor less than socialistic government—has been proven absolutely wrong. New Zealand with a socialistic form of government, carries a debt of \$488,000,000, and this before the war with a population of eleven hundred thousand. We are going to get a similar example in the working out of the regime just recently established in our sister state to the north. The verdict is that the only method by which we can reduce the cost of government is to **prevent the government from doing anything outside its real legitimate need.**

DENVER ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

The people are praying to be delivered from the government in railroad management.

PITTSBURGH GAZETTE TIMES

Public control of utilities is destructive of the morale of organizations taken over. Private management disciplines the human element through the prospect it affords of reward for initiative, talent, industry and fidelity. Government, offering nothing, has no grip on the great body of employes whose devotion is essential to its success. **The Socialistic scheme, so fair in theory, proves in practice to be blighting.**

ST. PAUL DISPATCH

Government management or control has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. The only entry to the credit side of the ledger is the conviction reached by the people that **if government management is a failure, government ownership would be worse.**

Roads Must Be Returned

MINNEAPOLIS JOURNAL

One single fact that stands out clearly is that railroads must be returned to private ownership, but kept under stiff government regulation. The roads would then be left to conserve their operating expenses and at the same time give the public the service that is needed at an expense to the public that would be minimum under the new increase of wages. **Government control would mean the maximum of expense through waste.**

CHARLOTTE (N. C.) OBSERVER

Private ownership and operation with Government protection and under Federal regulation, points the way to future successful railroading in this country.

NOGALES (ARIZ.) HERALD

The bubble of public ownership and operation has been pricked and has collapsed. Nobody wants it. What we have to consider is what must be done to enable the roads' to collect their revenue from traffic and not from the taxpayers.

LITTLE ROCK (ARK.) GAZETTE

We are beginning to believe that private corporations even without "souls" are much to be desired over so many government-controlled outfits.

The test of the theory has convinced many, who formerly favored it, that it will not work.

MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE

Experience of the country with government operation has been extremely unsatisfactory and has destroyed practically all the sentiment that may have existed heretofore in favor of government ownership. If this is what government ownership means, the public is saying, then we do not want any more of it and **we do want resumption of the better service that we used to have under private operation.**

DETROIT FREE PRESS

There is nothing in the managerial and financial record of the railroad administration up to this time of which any one ought to be excessively proud. It is not a showing that tends to inspire the public with admiration. **The public has garnered little except expense and trouble as a result of government control.**

TOPEKA CAPITAL

The railroads have submitted to operation at the hands of the federal government and from all accounts their recovery is problematical.

“Widespread Sentiment For Return”

FORT MADISON (IOWA) DEMOCRAT

It must be said that the results as a whole have not pleased the majority of the people and that a widespread sentiment in favor of a general return to private control is plainly indicated.

DAVENPORT (IOWA) TIMES

From every economic and industrial viewpoint government control has been a failure.

LEWISTON (IDAHO) BANNER

There is one thing certain, the general public has had a great plenty of government ownership, and is willing to take chances on control by “heartless corporations” so distasteful to the soap-box orator.

SYRACUSE JOURNAL .

There has never been a time since the first rails of our great transportation system were laid when the proposal of permanent government ownership carried a feebler appeal to the predominant judgment of the country than it does today. Up to two years ago it may have been alluring to many as a theory, but the system in practice since the winter of 1917-18 has made **millions of converts the other way.** It has been signalized by colossal losses to the government and therefore to the people, and by schedules of compensation to its working forces which have been grossly unjust, as measured by the rewards of the toilers in other industries that call for as much, or more skill and intelligence. It has been a record of financial disaster, as the cold figures of the towering deficit conclusively proves. **And now we are told that this ruinous experiment must go on indefinitely in order that one privileged class of American workers may continue to draw disproportionate incomes at the expense of their fellow citizens.**

The Nation Opposes Mixing Business and Politics

Anxiety is shown lest politics govern business, quite as much as though business were trying to govern politics. Inefficiency and waste are seen in government ownership.

SEATTLE TIMES

Is it their (the brotherhoods') purpose to make the proposed new national labor party an adjunct to their unions?

If so, they might reflect on the fact that powerful business agencies at various times have assayed to run national politics as an adjunct to their commercial enterprises.

These efforts have been vigorously and successfully opposed on all occasions by the American people, who have consistently **declined to recognize that their government was an appendage of special interests.**

So far as one may judge from current events and public utterances, the American people have not changed their opinions on this subject.

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

Wherever government control has placed its finger, it has left destruction.

And now we are asked by the brotherhoods to hand the roads over to the government permanently. Where they expect under such a condition to derive an excess profit for division among the employees is more than we know. Where, in the light of dismal experience they expect that the roads could even be made to pay their way is something quite incomprehensible. But it would seem to be certain that to the average man not employed by the railroads, government ownership is anything but desirable. It produces inefficiency instead of efficiency; waste and extravagance in place of economy. And it makes the railroads the toy of politics and politicians.

This is not theory. It is fact that has been demonstrated.

Wants No Political Management

MILWAUKEE SENTINEL

A big railroad deficit is not much of a "melon," Mr. Lee, to cut up and divide among employes.

What the country wants, or we miss our guess, is something in the way of a happy medium which would give the public the benefit of what is good in government supervision for unification, and of the business and general efficiency of company management—that is to say, **management of railroads by railroad men instead of politicians.**

BUTTE (MONT.) REVIEW

Politics and railroad administration do not go well together.

The Nation Opposes "Nationalizing" Land

Farmers and farmers' advocates are beginning to realize that they too are "capitalists" and may be the next marked for expropriation.

NEW YORK JOURNAL OF COMMERCE

But the important question is, How would the American farmer like the "nationalization" of land? It is not an exaggeration to say that this would be an actual problem facing him, and that as soon as the Plumb plan should go into effect.

Any farmer, be he Democrat or Republican, Farmers' Alliance or Granger in persuasion, would at once bitterly resent the idea of **having his land confiscated and being reduced to the position of a tenant farmer.** His landlord would be the State, which really means some politician in an office of trust and authority.

The American agricultural interests, noted for their stubborn and conservative views, would put up a fight that would be far stronger than any opposition ever waged against landlord, be he private citizen or official, by the farmers of any country of Europe, for the farmers of America are more experienced and would know exactly what they were losing rather than merely be striving for a new and long-desired ideal.

INDIANAPOLIS NEWS

The issue is not between the railroad men and the government, but between the railroad men and the rest of their fellow-citizens. * * * * We quote from an address by President Howard, of the Iowa Farmers federation:

I once asked a prominent union man if he had ever made any attempt to organize farm labor. He replied: "We have thought of doing so, but the more we look into the situation the more we realize that **production must be kept upon the farm** if we are all to be fed." Then you figure that the union man has a right to reduce production and work short hours, when **the farmer works long hours to feed him?** I asked. He declined to answer.

The new railroad bill, which is avowedly the first step in the program of the virtual nationalization of our great industries, is pernicious, dangerous, and wholly against the public interest.

"Would Seek Land Control, Too"

GREENWOOD (S. C.) INDEX-JOURNAL

The farmers, the land owners will be the last ones to surrender but if they allow all other industries to be **taken over for the benefit of those who work in these industries**, it is as certain as night follows day that **these powerful organizations will take over land.** Land is the bed rock of them all and as we have seen what has happened in Russia, in Austria, in Roumania, where the demand was anticipated by those in authority, the same thing will happen here.

MONTGOMERY (ALA.) ADVERTISER

We need not be so shallow or uncandid as to assume that only the railroads are involved. The system would be all-embracing. It would reach not only the wholesale but it would reach the corner retail druggist. * * * * Finally the bell would ring on the farmer. He is too much of a social necessity to hope to escape nationalization. * * * * His property will be taken away from him by his government and practically given over to those who had not had the thrift, industry and intelligence to acquire property by their own efforts. A new way to acquire property has been found. * * * * These raids on private property do not signify a fundamental dislike of property per se. Not that. Property is as popular as it ever was. But they signify a new-found method of acquiring property by depriving some one else of it. If we can get property by a statutory enactment and executive fiat, why work hard, save money and train the mind to make it more useful?

The Nation Opposes "Nationalizing" Industry

Other industries were warned by the labor leaders that the railroads were only the starting point. Little sympathy is shown for paternalism in this country.

WASHINGTON STAR

Suppose the workers in every other branch of industry were thus to assert themselves. * * * Suppose the workers in the big mills and factories were to announce the same policy? **Chaos would result.**

BOSTON HERALD

If the trainmen can decide that they would rather work for an easy boss, with no limits to what he can pay except the taxing resources of the republic, other great groups can do the same thing. The government can not only run the railroads, but the steel mills and the shoe factories. It can do the retailing. It can run the packing houses and the retail markets, and the thousand other enterprises. We should lurch into a socialistic state for which our form of government is the least adapted of any in the world.

OMAHA BEE

Should the public take over the entire ownership and management of the railroads, **what will be the effect on other basic industries?** * * * * The relation of any business undertaking to the public is now a subject for closer inspection than ever. For the moment coal mining is put forward as an illustration, but the logic that involves the fuel industry in the fate of transportation must also **include agriculture in all its branches**, and with equal directness proceed up and down the line, omitting nothing.

Mr. Bryan already has proposed the government-controlled press, a medium which will supplant the free press of the land, and through which only such information as pleases the powers in control would find its way to the people.

Are the American people ready to participate in the sweeping and obliterating changes so proposed in their government? Will they surrender the liberty of individual action in order to assume **an existence ordered for them by a bureaucracy?**

And When Taxes Cannot be Collected ?

GALVESTON NEWS

The President advocated the democratization of industry. The brotherhood chiefs' demand the socialization of the transportation industry, and, manifestly, as **a beginning in the socialization of other industries.** One is an evolutionary proposal; the other a revolutionary proposal. To quote the President's address in support of the demand of the brotherhood chiefs is to distort it.

NEW YORK JOURNAL OF COMMERCE

The railroad men have no greater rights than factory operatives; they merely have the advantage of position; they are in a place where they can strangle the community. Nevertheless, they will not be allowed to exploit the taxpayer exclusively; if the scheme of the brotherhoods works **all the industrial workers will adopt it. Suppose the taxpayer should be exterminated in the process?**

The Nation Opposes Class Greed

It is pointed out that labor, seeking all the advantages, is not willing to assume the responsibilities as well. Editorial comment shows a hostility to demands which ignore the welfare of all others.

DALLAS TIMES HERALD

All railroads do not make money. With the hope of eventually building up a paying business, capital has been content to lay rails into territory at first unprofitable. **Will labor be willing to do this and to pocket its losses** while the territory is being commercially developed?

Will the employes of those lines that pay be willing to split the swag with the employes of lines that do not pay? Is there to be a common grab bag for all?

Suppose labor, which is not familiar with financial operations, finds that its dream of substantial profits is but a dream. What will it do? Will it then come before Congress with another imperative demand that railroad operation in financially unproductive territory be abandoned? Will it insist that only the lines which produce substantial net revenue be continued?

These are but some of the problems connected with organized labor's proposal. There are others involving the question of service, of whether the employes would still insist on the strike privilege, or whether, in case of railroad deficits, **the people would be taxed to pay the trainmen.**

Except on the part of organized labor, there is little sentiment in this country in favor of government ownership of the roads.

WASHINGTON STAR

Why should the people at large buy any system of industry **for the benefit of its workers, without risk to them** or investment by them? If the United States is to go in for nationalization of railroads or of any other utility or production of necessity it should do so **for universal benefit and not for the direct, primary and specific advantage of those who work in those particular lines.**

Would Benefit One Class of Society

COLUMBUS (OHIO) STATE JOURNAL

The railroad men, backed by the American Federation of Labor, now demand that the country plunge into a Socialistic experiment on a large scale, on the theory that by so doing it will **benefit one class of society.** * * * *

Our recent experiments with government control of public utilities have proved failures more than successes. In every branch of industry temporarily taken over by the government the **cost to the patron has gone up** and the **quality of the service has gone down.** Service under public ownership has become almost a national joke with all save those who have secured easy and enormous wage increases under it.

ATLANTA CONSTITUTION

The division of profits with the government—should there be any profits to divide—could only be met by **forcing all other classes of labor**—the masses, in other words—to go into their pockets to pay such excess transportation rates as would be necessary to provide whatever bonus, above wages, is paid for **the sole benefit of this one exceptional class!**

SAVANNAH NEWS

The very heart of the fairness of the proposed plan is in the answer to this: **"If there is a loss, will labor make it good? If the roads cannot make expenses, will labor voluntarily accept lower wages—with the same principle operating which leads them, in their system, to demand increased wages time after time?"**

The tax-payer is found to be the man who will pay, that a minority of labor may profit.

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

In England miners make demands which will so increase the price of fuel as to make it impossible for Great Britain to compete in industry and commerce with other nations. The workmen recognize that and now demand that the coal mines be nationalized and the **deficit to make good their wages be made up by taxation.**

Obviously that is the intent of the railroad operatives of this country. They announce that they are determined that the Government shall take possession of all the railroads and operate them **for the benefit of those whose savings did not build them, and at the expense, should the deficit in operation continue, of all other classes** in this country.

SEATTLE POST INTELLIGENCER

Wages and reduced hours constitute a tempting bird in the hand, much more attractive than the profit-sharing bird in the bush, and until there is a more noticeable change in the fundamental beliefs of organized labor, we feel inclined to predict that **wages and hours will absorb all the profits** of any railroad partnership of the proposed character. And as for the reduction of rates and the promise of service, we have only to recall the glowing prospectus of the administration when the roads were taken over by the government.

A Five Per Cent Democracy

WASHINGTON POST

The Plumb plan, reduced to its last analysis, proposes that **45,000,000 wage earners shall assume a debt** of possibly \$30,000,000,000 in order that the railroads may be purchased by the government and placed **under the management, with a profit-sharing arrangement, of 2,000,000 railroad workmen.** And this is proposed in the name of democracy.

NEW YORK EVENING SUN

One thing seems to be forgotten in all these contrivings of selfishness, that is **plain ordinary good faith.** When the Government took the railroad properties for war purposes or on the plea of war necessity, their return to their owners, after the war, in as good condition as they were taken—one way or another—was promised. Why should not this guarantee be made good? The owners do not want wrecks returned to them, but they do want their roads back. It is in the highest interest of the public that they should have them.

OKLAHOMA OKLAHOMAN

The question that looms large at this time, is whether or not the country has reached the point where it is willing to force profit-sharing upon corporations or partnerships or individual employers. It is doubtful if the country will favor such a policy at this time, unless the employes who are to **share in the profits and are thus practically partners in the business** are also willing to **share in a deficit and in expenses** for necessary improvements.

The employees seek the gain, but are content to leave to the public all losses.

SALT LAKE CITY HERALD REPUBLICAN

Nothing is said about losses, notwithstanding the fact that it is a vital principle of partnerships that **losses as well as profits must be shared by the partners.**

Hence the public's part in the proposed partnership is vague. It is to take the part of private capital and **furnish the funds to meet all deficits.** In a word, the public is the partner which will furnish the finances for successful or unsuccessful operation.

TRAFFIC WORLD

Although the brotherhoods formulated the Plumb bill they took care to reserve the right to strike. While the corporation placed in charge of the government property would be composed of the laborers, their right to strike would be preserved. That is to say, the stockholders of the corporation created by Congress, who would also be its employees, at all times would have the right to break any contract that might be made by the duly appointed officers of the corporation, for any reason or excuse that might please their fancy. The creation of the corporation, it is suggested, would enable it to **hold the government to the performance of its part of the bargain, but not the men composing the operating corporation.** The minute the stockholders in that corporation thought they could force better terms they would be free to break the contract, without any of the penalties that would attach to an ordinary corporation. No penalties would be possible because the corporation would have no capital. Its stockholders might refuse to carry freight for a man not able to show a union card and **there would be no recourse.**

Would Burden Every Wage Earner

PORTLAND (ME.) PRESS

Even organized labor will oppose (the Plumb plan) unless we are greatly mistaken, because in the end it will put altogether **too heavy a burden upon the back of every wage earner, excepting those who are directly benefitted by it.**

ELIZABETH (N. J.) JOURNAL

The case of the railroad employes, especially the four brotherhoods, would excite public sympathy to greater degree if it were not known that they are, comparatively speaking, already well paid. **They are, in other words, better off than most workers** and most of those who are earners of small salaries.

NEW YORK TRIBUNE

The railroad workers are not to take the risks of the railroad business. They are to have the power to fix their own wages and are to be in exclusive charge of a high transportation monopoly. Rates must be at levels high enough to bring in the wages that they assign to themselves. Thus they are to exercise control over rates—are to be authorized to tax the public as they please for their own benefit. The profit-sharing feature is camouflage. It will be natural to mark up wages to absorb **100 per cent** of any surplus rather than to get only half, if any is allowed to accrue.* * * * The brotherhoods propose to carry no risk. **The only risk in the scheme is that cast on the public—the risk of being compelled to pay anything that it may please the operators of the monopoly to demand.**

The public's promised benefits are intangible, but the objections are clear, and a mighty burden.

SALT LAKE CITY HERALD REPUBLICAN

The public benefits in the Plumb plan are intangible and no more alluring than those made in behalf of federal operation. On the other hand, the plan establishes tangible guarantees for the railroad workers which are not shared by the other classes of labor. **As a matter of fact, the plan places new obligations upon the public without relieving them of any of the existing burdens.** It makes the public the financing power for all deficits and this is a mighty burden in the light of our experience with government operations.

Plan Would Destroy Incentive

BOSTON POST

The bill provides only that profits shall be shared equally between the employees and the public. It says nothing about sharing deficits. Wholly aside from this one-sided plan of placing all the risk on the public, **what incentive is there for the employees to show a profit?** If a profit is shown they must divide it with the public. But, if they first raise wages and salaries sufficiently, **they can get all the possible profit for themselves, leaving nothing for the public;** for profit is only arrived at after deducting all wages and salaries with other expenses.

PETERSBURG (VA.) APPEAL

We regard the proposal virtually to give the railroad operatives the income of the railroads as but a form of that selfishness which manifests itself so glaringly and so generally throughout the world today **in the form of profiteering. The profiteer is loading upon the public everything the public will bear.** The railway brotherhoods are seeking to take away from the owners their property in the railroads and vest it or the return therefrom in those employed to operate them.

BUFFALO ENQUIRER

What shall be done in event of losses does not appear in the statement, but preceding outlines of the plan place the losses on the public.

The virtues of this plan are speculative. Its shortcomings are obvious. * * * *
Nothing in it ensures cheaper transportation or guards against higher transportation which works into the higher cost of living. If it limits selfishness at one end it **establishes opportunity for selfishness at the other.**

NEW YORK EVENING MAIL

In their arguments for private ownership the railroad executives speak the mind of the American people. Government control would be wise, expedient and useful. But it is a far cry from government ownership and operation.

The Nation Demands Lower Living Cost

Government ownership and strikes to compel its adoption add to a living cost which is already distressing. The great need is a return to industry and production.

BALTIMORE NEWS

The entire country, not one class in it, is laboring under the high cost of living. The shopmen are demanding not equalization of their own and the common lot but **their preferment at the cost of all the rest**. There is only one way to put them where they will not feel the burden of making ends meet. It is for the rest to accept an increased burden.

The first striker is the one who has the least cause for striking. The next does so because he is up against the same conditions aggravated to the extent that the first has obtained relief in higher wages.

There is no real relief in such methods of downing the high cost of living. **The man who strikes for higher wages is a striker in favor of still higher cost of living**, for his friends first, it is true, but ultimately for himself as inevitably as for any other.

NEW HAVEN JOURNAL-COURIER

A solution that does not proceed upon the understanding that the problem is a common one, affecting the whole people of the country, will be no solution at all. And because this is so, those who insist that their particular grievances shall take precedence over all others are simply doing all in their power to place the problem of the **high cost of living farther and farther beyond the reach** of those whose duty it is to consider it.

Opposes Strikes for Political Purposes

SATURDAY EVENING POST

If a man says he is desperately hard up and immediately knocks off work a week to go fishing you find it hard to believe him. The people who are saying that wage labor is desperately hard up—just managing to eke out a bread and water existence—are precisely **the people who urge labor to go on general strikes**, sympathetic strikes, strikes for political purposes or for demonstrations.

A strike is a very costly thing for wage labor. Striking for higher wages or shorter hours or better shop conditions or the right of collective bargaining is understandable. But when labor goes on strike for politics or demonstration of some purpose that has **no** relation to wages, hours and other immediate economic conditions, it is impossible not to believe that labor has something to blow in; that it feels able to afford a luxury.

NEW YORK TIMES

It must be the Brotherhoods themselves that are going to raise this \$2,500,000, this not less than \$10,000,000 (the Plumb plan educational fund). Persons with pocket-books so fat, persons so able to give and so generous in giving, can't be suffering deeply from **that high cost of living which they are so eager to increase**. The Brotherhoods have unconsciously betrayed themselves.

PROVIDENCE JOURNAL

The truth of the statement that the railway men are the best paid in the country would seem to be demonstrated by Mr. Plumb's estimate of the amount available for propaganda. However, if the railroad men are really troubled by "the high cost of living," **why do they not apply these spare millions to their grocery bills?**

Editors find no way in which special assistance to one class can be given save at the expense of the whole public.

SPRINGFIELD (MASS.) UNION

Stated briefly, what the brotherhoods of railway employes seek to force upon the country is **government of the people by the railroad men and for the railroad men**. Here and there will be found a citizen who, not being a railroad man, fails to become enthusiastic over the scheme.

WHEELING (W. VA.) INTELLIGENCER

They can not be guaranteed wages at the government's expense, and no class of employes, whatever the value of their services, should be put in a position to use the power of the government **to draw from the pockets of their fellow citizens a greater compensation** than they might otherwise get.

Higher Wages to One—Higher Cost to All

SEATTLE POST INTELLIGENCER

If the railroad employes are to have 800 million dollars more a year it will simply mean that much more added to the freight bill, and inasmuch as the freight bill is an important item in the cost of living, in the end **it means 800 million more to the cost of living**. And to meet this additional cost of living of course wages will again have to be increased. We can play tag in this fashion for a long time, but eventually the absurdity of the game will bring it to a close.

OMAHA BEE

Any strike now by any group of men, no matter in what industry, contributes to the maintenance of the present high price level, for just so far as such action tends **to check production**, just that far is **the supply lowered while the demand is increased** instead of diminished by the voluntary or enforced idleness of any number of producers.

Nothing in the proposal threatens to reduce the cost of living. Rather, the living cost would be increased.

NEWARK LEDGER

Strikes, whether they be railroad strikes or strikes in factories, **will not solve the problem of the high cost of living, but on the contrary they will aggravate the problem**, which the Federal authorities are now making every effort to solve. * * * *

The United States must not look to the Lenines for inspiration, unless it be inspiration to keep us as far as possible from the ideas of that apostle of industrial and social destruction.

RAILWAY AGE

It is easy to sympathize with the complaint of the employees that the benefit of the billion-dollar a year advance in wages which has been given them under government operation has been nullified by the increase in the cost of living. The real question, however, **is whether the railway employees are better entitled to further advances in wages than the public is to immunity from the increase in taxes** or in freight and passenger rates which a further advance in wages would make necessary. The claim made for the employees' plan of government ownership and employees' management that it would stop increases in the general cost of living, and even cause reductions in it, is of all claims that could be made for it the most preposterous.

Money Must Come From the People

ALBANY EVENING JOURNAL

The plan means that the owners should be compelled to accept the bonds (4 per cent for acquiring the railroads) for it would be impossible to raise cash through sale of the bonds to the public. The public would not buy. The public is loaded down with Liberty Bonds which, though they bear $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent interest, are selling in the open market at prices from five to more than six dollars below par. * * * *

The money for the redemption of bonds must come from the people. While they remain outstanding, the money to pay **the interest on them must come from the people.**

The annual interest that the people would have to pay on this addition to the debt would be approximately \$1,000,000,000, nearly \$10 per capita, or between \$40 or \$50 to the average family.

Besides, the people would have to make good the huge annual deficit from operation under government ownership which has been shown to be inevitable.

WASHINGTON STAR

If the demands of these railroad men are granted and their pay is raised, **a tax of over a billion dollars will be levied upon the railroads, and consequently upon the consumers of everything that is used after transportation by rail.** That sum will enter into the equation of the cost of living, increasing it still further. * * * * Are the workers in one branch of industry to remain permanently in control of the means of compulsion of wage increases and hour reductions, while **the remainder of the people suffer in bearing the burden of this increment for the benefit of a favored few?**

A tripartite arrangement will hardly be satisfactory if it includes the workers to determine the pay roll, the government to raise the rates and the public to produce the necessary funds.

***Chorus of protest against government ownership is heard
from all sections of the country.***

PHILADELPHIA PRESS

Fact piles on fact to prove that in the opinion of the people of the country the Government operation of railroads has proved a flat failure. * * * The North and the South, the East and the West, are alike convinced that the United States is not the place for such management. **The people want private management under efficient and broad gauge Federal control.**

CHICAGO POST

Congress must prevent the continued inertia that is the direct result of government ownership; on the other hand it must prevent frightened politicians from throwing the roads to private ownership without legislating to solve any of the great problems created by the period of government control.

NASHVILLE BANNER

Government ownership would always be inefficient and saturated with politics that is highly objectionable. Government ownership is not therefore for any reason desirable and the Plumb plan is a revolutionary monstrosity.

“Has Proved a Disappointment”

CLEVELAND PLAIN-DEALER

The plain fact seems to be that the trend of popular sentiment is at present away from public ownership of utilities. **Government operation of the railroads has proved a disappointment.**

LOS ANGELES TIMES

So far about the only element of the population in favor of continued government control is made up of the railroad employees who have found that with the roads out of the hands of their owners and in control of the politicians it is easier to jack up their own high wages, at the expense, of course, of the common people who not only are compelled to pay increased passenger and freight rates, but provide from their own pockets for a great deficiency every month besides.

NEW ORLEANS TIMES-PICAYUNE

The government administration of the railroads is still floundering about in an endeavor to get the transportation service back into such working order that it will be a business once more, and not merely a function of the central authority.

Editors point out what private capital has made and can make possible and warn against expropriation methods.

REVIEW OF REVIEWS

The money invested in railroads has rendered a greater public service than any other investment that has been made out of the savings of the American people. Much of it has already been confiscated by unjust policies of regulation and control. * * * Whatever the brotherhood chiefs may have to say about the management and operation of railroads, they are ill-advised when they fail to recognize the rights of the people whose money has been invested in railroad stocks and bonds. * * *

If we believed that the Plumb plan would accomplish what Mr. Stone thinks it will do, we should certainly not oppose it; but it does not appeal to us as a timely solution.

UTICA OBSERVER

The railroads should be turned back to private management, and through some medium of reasonable and high-minded regulation, they must be permitted to conduct their own affairs, harmonizing rates and the cost of labor and supplies in such a manner as to make the conduct of the business such as would commend itself as a business proposition.

“The Foundation of American Business”

SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS

Private capital uncovered and developed the resources of the United States. Private capital opened up to settlement and use and prosperity, the places that had been wasted and idle. Private capital footed the payrolls of the laborers who built and ran the railroads. Private capital built and operated the factories. It was the private capital of farmers that bought and tended the farms and made them productive. **Private capital is the foundation and the superstructure of all American business; and wages are the biggest bills that private capital pays.**

SPOKANE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

The country wants good service, without discriminations, and is willing to pay for it. It has no desire to impoverish the lines or to deny invested capital a fair and even generous return for its service.

ALBANY KNICKERBOCKER PRESS

The thing to do is to return the roads to their owners forthwith, under conditions which will protect them from the consequences of official folly and which will guarantee them in the future the square deal which they have not had in many years.

Farm papers show no desire for government ownership or class favoritism.

ORANGE JUDD FARMER

Government operation, with its terrific waste and extravagance, has been bad enough, but compared with the proposed operation by labor leaders and politicians for their joint benefit, even government operation would appear respectable.

The time has come when the sober common sense of the American people must stand up squarely and put an end to this building up of one class of workers at the expense of all others.

BOISE IDAHO FARMER

So far as our observation has gone the farmers are likely to oppose this proposition (the Plumb plan). A number of farm organizations are already on record in opposition, and **we have not heard of any farmers who approve it.**

Peril for the Small Savings Funds

NEW YORK HERALD

It is perfectly clear that if the Plumb plan is put into operation it will lead to the application of the same doctrine to all other industries of an interstate character.

**This would destroy the only system under which any workingman or work-
ingwoman of industry and thrift can save money and see it increase and grow.** Every man or woman who has a home or a little money in a savings bank is a capitalist. The millions of thrifty men and women, many of whom own stock in the institutions where they work, will not tolerate a system that destroys their right to save and accumulate.

JERSEY CITY OBSERVER

The country has had a sad experience with government control of railroads and other public utilities. * * * If the government takes over the railroads they would become powerful political machines notwithstanding the clause making it a crime for politicians to interfere. **It has been clearly demonstrated that railroads are more efficiently managed by the experts employed by the private owners than they can be by the government.**

NEW YORK WALL STREET JOURNAL

A scheme so completely devised in ignorance and folly to destroy the transportation business has never been recorded in the history of economics, and the only parallel is the Bolshevik destruction of productive industry in Russia. **Results under the Sims Bill would be identical and would mean the ruin of every industry in the United States.**

Editors fail to see what has transpired to warrant further experiment with government control.

AUGUSTA, (GA.,) CHRONICLE

It would seem that in all the experiments our government has made in attempting to carry on any kind of business in competition with private parties, it has failed, and this should at least direct our attention away from government ownership of railroads, or the operation of any business of any character.

Failure to make good is the best argument that can be offered against any organization, or any plan, whether governmental in its nature, or whether conducted by private parties.

PHILADELPHIA BULLETIN

If service doesn't improve under government direction—and there has been no sign in that direction in the experience of the United States—and instead of costing less the rates are raised, what advantages are there in floating United States bonds for the purpose of taking over these private enterprises?

BALTIMORE AMERICAN

Government control was a war necessity. It has never been a peace desirability. Government control has been costly beyond the anticipations of its most vigorous foes. Government ownership would be more so.

PROVIDENCE TRIBUNE

It is admitted on all sides that there is only one safe policy now, which is a return of the railroads to private control, under strict government supervision. **The experiment of public operation of the lines, in the unusual circumstances, has discredited the principle.**

Bar Politics and Class Interests

BROOKLYN EAGLE

We believe that the majority opinion in this country is against government ownership and operation of railroads and for the maintenance of private ownership an operation under a reasonable measure of government supervision. **Politics should have no controlling part in the settlement of railroad problems. Class interests should have no controlling part.**

LESLIE'S WEEKLY

With these experiences of Government operation fresh in mind, the public is in no mood to have the extra cost and inconvenience that would go with Government ownership permanently saddled upon it.

The Real Menace

It may be true, as some of the news dispatches and editorials say, that the Plumb bill is dead and the Brotherhood plan is sidetracked and ditched, but the real Plumb menace continues.

It has been inconceivable from the first that any considerable number of engineers and conductors would follow the bad leadership of revolutionists.

To get down to cases, what engineer or conductor of your acquaintance strikes you as being a Red fire-brand? You know these men. Perhaps your property adjoins that owned by one of them. You belong to the lodge which is proud to have them in its membership. You attend the same church that some of them and their families help to support. You know them as steady going, conservative good citizens.

When you try to visualize them as being even remotely connected with a scheme for destroying democratic government in the United States and setting up Soviet rule, you discover that you have no mental apparatus for making this picture.

As for us, we have no least fear that once the issue is clearly presented, the railroad men of the brotherhoods will put themselves behind the plan that has been proposed in their name and push it through to the goal set up by its logic.

The real menace is not in the attitude of the rank and file of the brotherhood members, but in the effect of the Plumb, Stone and Garretson talk upon the radical, socialist element that exists in our society and permeates American labor. This talk will galvanize into new activity the remaining members of the moribund I. W. W. It will be hailed by the ill-regulated minds in the purlieus of great cities as an indication that the brotherhoods are coming to the aid of the revolutionary proletariat in their truceless war against capital.

When Plumb and the brotherhood chiefs talk about emancipating industry from capital, about nationalizing all the wealth producing resources, about the crusade of the "new Pilgrims" they give hope to the disseminators and the readers of the countless tracts and pamphlets that flood the country with incitement to a class revolution.

It is said that the Sims bill embodying the Plumb plan will not be so much as reported. It is said to be dead already. But the Plumb talk and propaganda continue. The railroad men themselves ought to put a stop to it. It seems incredible that they should back it up and attempt to force nationalization by a strike.

It is for them to consider that if they do this thing they will liberate all the forces that broke into and monopolized the Winnipeg strike, converted it into an incipient political revolution and drove a wedge into the ranks of labor itself so deeply that now there is a bitter fight on between business unionism and revolutionary unionism in Canada that probably will absorb the energies of labor for some time to the great loss of the sensible labor movement.

—Manchester (N. H.) Union.

An Expert's Opinion

"I am unable to accept this proposal as creating an issue between railroad companies and the great body of employees. The workers on the railroads are fair-minded men, thoroughly patriotic and devoted, as their fellow citizens are, to our American institutions.

"In my judgment, they will never knowingly consent to dangerous experiments destructive of our institutions, under which we have grown to be the foremost nation of the world, and under which there have been established standards of happiness and well-being of which all of us have a right to be proud.

"I have complete confidence that a proposal as radical, as revolutionary of the accepted and cherished principles of our social and economic life, as the proposal made to you, will never, when it is fully understood, receive the sanction of the great body of our citizens, whether engaged in railroad work or in other occupations.

"The people have already made a correct appraisal of the danger of the proposal, and have realized that it involves in essence the taking of the means of all the people, to acquire the railroad properties from their owners, and turn them over, not to all the people, not even to all labor, but to one class of labor—and that a comparatively small one—to manage and operate for their own advantage and without adequate responsibility to any public authority.

"It is declared by the proponents of this measure that it introduces democracy into industry. Democracy is the rule of all the people. But this would be the rule of a very small minority. Instead of democratizing industry, it would establish in industry class power and privilege. It is a proposal to take a large part of the national wealth and set it aside for the benefit of relatively a very small class of our population, at the expense of all the rest.

"Railroad owners, while the immediate object of attack, are by no means chiefly interested in the issue which has thus been raised, although these owners, directly and indirectly, constitute a very large part of our population.

"The issue affects the entire people, for it constitutes an assault upon the very fundamentals of our institution.

"As such it is the business of the entire public and as such it will be opposed by all these who are attached to American ideals and to American conceptions of government and social order."

—Thomas De Witt Cuyler, Chairman of the Association of Railway Executives, before the committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, of the House of Representatives, Washington, August 20, 1919.

How 5,922 Editors Voted

A QUESTIONNAIRE was sent to all newspaper publishers in the United States, asking them to report on the sentiment in their communities for or against Government Ownership of railroads. The replies left no doubt as to the country's position.

Of the 5,922 editors who thus went on record, 83 per cent. made it clear that they wished a prompt return of the railroads to their owners; 11 per cent. were opposed; 6 per cent. were doubtful.

There was no distinction within any of the three groups as to party or geographical location.

The accompanying graphic chart shows the division of opinion among the 5,922 editors of all parties, of all sections, on the question of returning the roads "to private ownership and operation as soon as this can properly be accomplished."

